

## REMARKS

In the Official Action of December 16, 2005, the specification was objected to as lacking proper antecedent basis for the expression “substantially continuous tow fibers”. This expression has also been objected to as being new matter.

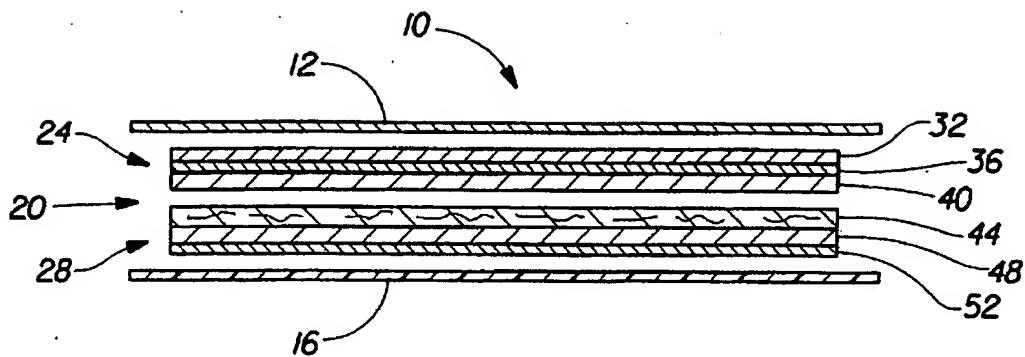
In response, the claims have been amended to delete the word “substantially”, and to state that the tow fibers are continuous crimped filaments. Literal antecedent support for this amendment is found on page 31, line 25 of the specification. Accordingly, withdrawal of the prior objection is respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to the claims.

Claims 1-7, 16 and 27-45 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Pieniak et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,123,694) in view of Goldman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,562,646). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner states that the Pieniak et al. reference discloses the absorbent articles of the present invention except for the fact that the present invention utilizes a laminate absorbent core having at least four layers. Applicant points out that the Pieniak et al. reference also fails to disclose a central fibrous core containing a mixture of super absorbent polymer (SAP) and continuous crimped tow fibers. As stated in the present specification, continuous crimped tow fibers have a structure with high integrity and strength, as contrasted to a matrix of discontinuous fibers described as “fluff” in the prior art. This structure enables the production of stronger webs and thinner absorbent pads. See pages 31 and 32 of the specification.

The Goldman et al. reference has been cited in order to remedy the deficiencies of the Pieniak et all reference. However, applicants respectfully submits that the Goldman et al. reference fails to remedy these shortcomings.

Goldman discloses an absorbent member that has a multi-layer absorbent core as shown in Figure 1:



As shown in Figure 1 (above), Goldman discloses a multilayer absorbent core (20) having an upper assembly (24) and a lower assembly (28). The upper assembly comprises an upper acquisition /distribution layer (32), and a first hydrogel-forming absorbent polymer layer (40) separated from the acquisition layer (32) by a tissue layer (36). The lower assembly comprises an upper fibrous layer (44), a lower layer (48) that comprises the second hydrogel-forming absorbent polymer, and a tissue layer (52). See also Goldman at col. 34, lines 37- 47.

The upper fibrous layer (44) of Goldman comprises a fibrous matrix of hydrogel-forming absorbent polymer. Goldman discloses that the fibrous materials may be natural fibers, or synthetic fibers. Goldman, col. 23, lines 16-18. But Goldman does not disclose that these fibers may be continuous crimped tow fibers. Goldman discloses that the fiber length can vary depending upon the particular melt point and other properties desired for the fibers. Typically, the thermoplastic fibers in Goldman have a length from about 0.3 to 7.5 cm. Goldman col. 28, lines 32-36. However, a typical baby diaper absorbent core is at least 10 cm long and a typical adult diaper absorbent core is much longer than that. Therefore, a fiber of length 7.5 cm would not be considered continuous in these cores.

Thus, Goldman fails to suggest an absorbent laminate having a central fibrous layer disposed between the upper and lower layer containing from about 30% to about 50% by weight SAP and continuous crimped tow fibers.

In view of the aforementioned facts and reasons, the present application is now believed to overcome the remaining rejections in this application, and to be in proper condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance

of the remaining claims in this application, is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to discuss any matter pertaining to the status of this application.

Dated: 3 / 16 / 04

Respectfully submitted,

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